# COOKING APPLIANCES
## 'Pro' doesn't deliver

**STYLISH CHEF** GE's Profile J2B918WEK, $1,900 in stainless, outcooked professional-style ranges and combines a gas cooktop with an electric oven.

**Outsized stainless ranges from Thermador and Viking aren't the only pro-style appliances these days. Even wall ovens are moving upscale as other brands and gear climb the social ladder. But "pro" isn't necessarily a step up.**

Kenmore's Pro series ranges and wall ovens mark the manufacturer's latest venture into high-end design, with stainless construction and chunky controls. Sears says its new line adapts "the most desirable qualities of professional kitchen appliances to perfectly suit home cooks at a price that is right." Two new models we tested performed well, though not without some repairs.

As for price, "right" doesn't mean lower. The $2,000 Pro 4100 wall oven costs the same as Sears' less-tony Kenmore Elites. But the 30-inch-wide, $4,000 Kenmore Pro 7952 dual-fuel range is priced as high as some 36-inch models.

Other cooking-appliance brands are pushing style and technology for less money as they strive for snob appeal. You'll also see more lower-priced induction cooktops, which offer quick heating using a magnetic field, ranges with built-in microwave ovens, and cooktops without the usual control knobs.

Our test cooking included some 650 cups of popcorn, 700 pounds of beef, and 6,200 cookies. When we were done, we wound up with a smorgasbord of CR Quick Picks and Best Buys from among the 45 ranges, cooktops, wall ovens, and over-the-range microwave ovens in our Select Ratings. Some other new models didn't live up to their brand reputations, however. And some of them delivered less than their names imply. Here are the details from our tests:

**Two pros break down.** Sears' Kenmore ranges and wall ovens have proven reliable in our brand-repair surveys. But we had to call a Sears repairman to fix a malfunctioning oven-probe sensor on the new Kenmore Pro range and a bake-element short on the Pro wall oven we tested. The repairman handled the range problem on his first visit. But it took eight visits to fix our faulty wall oven.

**Another pro proves mediocre.** From its king-sized knobs to its beefy oven handle, Frigidaire's Professional PLGF659EC gas range looks like a $4,000 model at roughly half the price. Yet as with many pro-style ranges we've tested, cooktop performance for this model was merely middling. And while its 30-inch

**First things first** Decide whether you want a stand-alone range or a cooktop/wall-oven combo. ▶

### STAND-ALONE RANGE
### $350 AND UP

**Best for** everyday cooking and economy. More money buys more features and style, including slide-in configurations, stainless finishes, dual fuel, and pro-style models wider than 30 inches.

**But** pro-style ranges can cost thousands and are often outcooked by mainstream models; some brands have been repair-prone. All lack the flexibility of a cooktop/wall-oven combo.

OR

### COOKTOP & WALL OVEN
### $1,000 AND UP

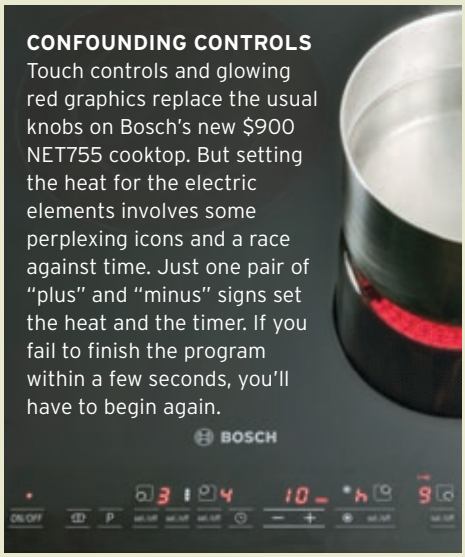
**Best for** the flexibility of separate cooking areas, especially if you're remodeling. Some cooktop-and-wall-oven combos can cost less than some stand-alone ranges, especially gas ranges.

**But** installation costs more than for a stand-alone range. You'll also find a growing number of stylish and competent ranges for less than you'd pay for many cooktop/wall-oven combos.

## morehype

### SOME FLASHY NEW DESIGNS BRING FLAWS

**POLISHED PRETENDER**
Frigidaire's $2,100, 36-inch-wide Professional PLGF659EC might look like a heavy-duty range. But its 30-inch oven is small, and its burner performance proved mediocre.




**CONFOUNDING CONTROLS**
Touch controls and glowing red graphics replace the usual knobs on Bosch's new $900 NET755 cooktop. But setting the heat for the electric elements involves some perplexing icons and a race against time. Just one pair of "plus" and "minus" signs set the heat and the timer. If you fail to finish the program within a few seconds, you'll have to begin again.

oven delivered impressive baking and broiling, it's surprisingly small.

**A microwave steals space.** Melding appliances seems like a clever way to cut clutter. The microwave drawer above the oven door on Sharp's $2,200 InsightPro KB-3425LS works well and leaves enough oven space to cook a 20-pound turkey. Just don't expect any room for the trimmings. What's more, the built-in microwave drawer pushes the oven cavity lower, making you bend farther down.

**A cooktop gets complex.** Bosch calls the touch controls on its $900 NET755 electric smoothtop "the most advanced technology on the market." But you'd better study the directions. Turning on a burner seemed simple enough—just hold your finger on the element icon. Once you select an element, however, you must quickly move to a second icon to set the power level, or you'll have to start over.

### HOW TO CHOOSE

You don't have to go "pro" or give up performance to cook in style. Begin by checking First Things First on the facing page to decide whether you prefer a stand-alone range or a cooktop and wall oven. Also decide whether you feel the space savings of an over-the-range microwave oven is worth sacrificing the better venting you'll get with a range hood. Then follow these cooking-appliance tips as you shop:

**Consider the fuel.** Electric ranges and cooktops tend to heat faster and simmer better than gas versions. On the minus side, they take longer to cool and lack the visual confirmation of a gas flame. Induction cooktops heat fastest and respond quickest to temperature settings. More models also cost less than $2,000, rather than $3,000, though that's still about a grand more than most cooktops.

**Size up wall ovens.** Models can be single or double, and are typically 24, 27, or 30 inches wide. While you can install wall ovens at waist or eye level to eliminate bending, they can also nest beneath a countertop if kitchen space is tight.

**Don't assume that more is better.** Expandable range elements, five or more burners, and a large oven are important if you feed lots of guests or cook different meals for picky teenagers. But 12-inch elements are larger than most pots and are likely to be more than you need, especially if you mostly warm leftovers and heat soup. And while convection can speed roasting by forcing hot air around the oven, its fans can steal space and its speed adds roughly $250 to the price.

**Be leery about microwave space.** Microwave manufacturers often inflate the true capacity of their ovens by counting wasted space in the corners. Our measurements show that actual space can be as much as 50 percent less. If you often cook for a crowd, consider models that trade the usual turntable for a rectangular tray that slides back and forth to accommodate wide plates while keeping them moving for more even cooking.

Another tip: Bring a favorite dish or platter to the store to make sure that it fits.

Then choose between the convenience of an over-the-range microwave and the better venting of a range hood.

**OVER-THE-RANGE MICROWAVE**
**$300 AND UP**

**Best for** space savings and convenience. Many over-the-range models often offer convection. And most now include a sensor that prevents under- or overcooking by adjusting cooking time according to the steam produced as the food heats.

**But** none of the over-the-range microwave ovens we tested could match most range hoods' smoke-capturing ability.

OR

**RANGE HOOD**
**$225 AND UP**

**Best for** venting smoke, fumes, and cooking heat. Range hoods are becoming as fashionable as they are practical; stainless models cost well under $1,000.

**But** you'll have to find space for a countertop oven if microwaving is a part of your cooking. While good under-cabinet and wall-chimney models often cost $800 or less, island models can easily cost $2,000 or more.

## Features that count
These add convenience to ranges, cooktops, and wall ovens.

**Continuous grates.** Grates abut one another for sliding large cookware. On GE (11, 12, 13, 19, 20), Maytag (14), Frigidaire (16), Kenmore (17, 21), and Bosch (18) ranges and GE (5) and Maytag (6) cooktops.

**Split oven racks.** Hinged or half-width upper racks fit stacked dishes on one side, taller items on the other. On Kenmore (7, 17, 21) and Maytag (14) ranges.

**Covered oven element.** Keeps spills from encrusting the element. On Kenmore (1, 7, 8) and GE (2, 6) ranges and GE (11), KitchenAid (13), and Frigidaire (14) wall ovens.

**Gas on glass.** Burners are set on or into a smooth ceramic surface with grates. On Maytag (6) and GE (7) cooktops.

**Hot-surface light.** Warns when the cooktop is too hot to touch. On GE (2) and Frigidaire (3) ranges and on Electrolux (1), Kenmore (2, 10), Whirlpool (3), Maytag (4), and Thermador (9) cooktops.

**Sealed burners.** Reservoirs without gaps prevent crumbs and spills from falling beneath. On Hotpoint (10), GE (11, 12, 13, 19, 20), Maytag (14, 15), Frigidaire (16), Kenmore (17, 21), and Bosch (18) ranges and GE (5, 7), Maytag (6), and Magic Chef (8) cooktops.

**Warming drawer.** For keeping plates and food warm. On Kenmore (1, 7, 8, 17, 21), GE (6, 11, 13, 19, 20), and Bosch (18) ranges.

**Touchpad oven controls.** Push buttons, digital readouts, and touch screens make setting precise temperatures easier. On all tested ranges and wall ovens.

**Warming element.** Uses low wattage to keep food warm. On Kenmore (1, 7) and GE (2, 6) ranges and on Kenmore (10) cooktop.

**Bridge element.** Merges two elements for oversized cookware. On GE (2, 6) and Kenmore (7) ranges.

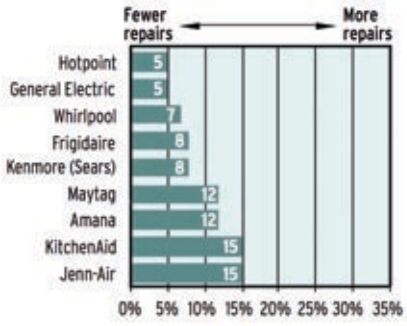
**Expandable elements.** Concentric rings let you power outer ones for larger cookware. On Kenmore (1, 4, 7), Frigidaire (3), and GE (6) ranges and on Electrolux (1), Kenmore (2), Maytag (4), and Thermador (9) cooktops.

## Brand repair history

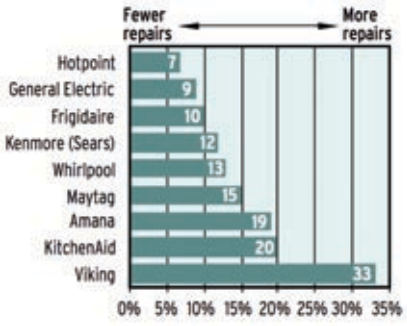
### Our readers report on almost 102,000 electric and gas ranges.

The graphs at right show the percentage of ranges bought new between 2000 and 2006 that were ever repaired or had a serious problem that was not repaired. Differences of less than 3 points are not meaningful. We lacked enough data for the oldest models to include dual-fuel brands in the graphs at this time. But data we have indicate that Dacor has been relatively repair-prone among dual-fuel brands, while Frigidaire, GE, Jenn-Air, and Kenmore have not. Models within a brand may vary, and changes in design and manufacture may affect reliability. Still, choosing a brand with a good repair history improves your odds of getting a reliable range.

**ELECTRIC RANGES**




**GAS RANGES**




Data are based on reader responses concerning 66,893 electric ranges and 35,063 gas ranges to the Annual Product Reliability Survey conducted by Consumer Reports National Research Center. Data have been adjusted to eliminate differences linked to age. Electric and gas ranges were analyzed separately, so the data are not directly comparable.

## CR Quick Recommendations

Our Select Ratings focus on tested ranges with the performance and value required to make our Quick Picks list (**blue** key numbers). Our heating, simmering, baking, and broiling tests yielded an array of top-performing models in all the key categories. To broaden your selection, we also include other fine choices that distinguished themselves in our tests.

## QUICK PICKS

### ELECTRIC RANGES

**Best for most; fine overall:**

Among electric smoothtop ranges, consider the **Kenmore** (1, 4), **Frigidaire** (3), and **Maytag** (5) for their value, the **GE** (6) if you want convection. The GE (2) and Kenmore (7) also have convection, but are priced higher. Among electric coiltops, pick the **Kenmore** (8) for its superb simmering and broiling, the **Hotpoint** (9) for its low price.

### GAS AND DUAL-FUEL RANGES

**Best gas ranges for most; fine overall:**

Among our gas ranges, the **Hotpoint** (10) offers the most performance for the money. But the **GE** (12, 13) and low-priced **Maytag** (15) are also capable performers. Paying more for the **Maytag** (14) and **Frigidaire** (16) buys a convection option for the oven—an option that has offered speedier cooking for some foods. Also consider the pricier, convection-equipped GE (11) for its superb low-heat performance, the Kenmore (17) for its fine broiling performance.

**If you want a dual-fuel range:**

Dual-fuel ranges, which meld a gas cooktop with an electric oven, tend to be pricey and have shown no clear benefits in our testing. But if you prefer one of those models, consider the **Bosch** (18) and **Kenmore** (21) for their broiling performance, the **GE** (19) for its high-heat performance. All three models have a convection-equipped oven. Also consider the non-convection GE (20) if you're willing to trade some broiling performance for a lower price.

**If you want a 36-inch range:**

The $5,800 Thermador Pro Grand PG366BS and $5,000 dual-fuel GE Monogram ZDP36N6H performed best among the big pro-style ranges we tested. But neither of those large, pricey ranges are CR Quick Picks; you'll find other models that performed better for far less.

# SELECT. Ratings 30-inch gas & electric ranges

Best choices from our tests of 59 models.

- **Availability** Most models in stores through December 2007.

Excellent · Very good · Good · Fair · Poor

**Within types, in performance order. Blue key numbers indicate Quick Picks.**

| Key number | Brand & model | Price | Overall score (0–100; P F G VG E) | Test results: Cooktop high | Cooktop low | Oven: Baking | Broiling | Capacity | Features: Burners: High power | Medium power | Low power | Convection oven | Stainless steel |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Similar models,** in small type, are comparable to tested model. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | **ELECTRIC SMOOTHTOP MODELS** *These blend sleek styling and easier cleanup.* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CR BEST BUY | 1 | **Kenmore** (Sears) 9641[2] 9642[ ] | $750 | 81 | ● | ● | ◒ | ● | ◒ | 2 | 0 | 2 | | • |
| | 2 | **GE** Profile JB968TK[WW] | 1,550 | 76 | ◒ | ● | ◒ | ○ | ● | 1 | 2 | 1 | • | • |
| CR BEST BUY | 3 | **Frigidaire** Gallery GLEF369D[S] | 700 | 76 | ◒ | ● | ◒ | ● | ◒ | 2 | 0 | 2 | | |
| CR BEST BUY | 4 | **Kenmore** (Sears) 9611[2] 9612[ ] | 580 | 76 | ◒ | ● | ◒ | ● | ◒ | 2 | 0 | 2 | | • |
| CR BEST BUY | 5 | **Maytag** MER5752BA[W] | 550 | 74 | ◒ | ● | ◒ | ○ | ◒ | 2 | 0 | 2 | | • |
| | 6 | **GE** JBP84TK[WW] | 1,100 | 74 | ◒ | ● | ◒ | ○ | ● | 1 | 2 | 1 | • | • |
| | 7 | **Kenmore** (Sears) Elite 9659[2] | 1,500 | 69 | ◒ | ● | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | 1 | 2 | 1 | • | • |
| | **ELECTRIC-COIL MODELS** *These deliver lots of performance for the price.* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 8 | **Kenmore** (Sears) 9421[2] | 530 | 82 | ◒ | ● | ◒ | ● | ● | 2 | 0 | 2 | | • |
| CR BEST BUY | 9 | **Hotpoint** RB757WH[WW] | 350 | 73 | ◒ | ● | ◒ | ○ | ◒ | 2 | 0 | 2 | | |
| | **GAS MODELS** *These ranges' visible flames are easy to adjust precisely.* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CR BEST BUY | 10 | **Hotpoint** RGB745WEH[WW] | 550 | 72 | ○ | ● | ◒ | ● | ◒ | 1 | 2 | 1 | | |
| | 11 | **GE** Profile JGBP918WEK[WW] | 1,600 | 69 | ◒ | ● | ◒ | ○ | ◒ | 1 | 2 | 2 | • | • |
| | 12 | **GE** JGBP35WEJ[WW] | 800 | 69 | ○ | ● | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | 1 | 2 | 1 | | • |
| | 13 | **GE** JGBP85WEJ[WW] | 850 | 68 | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | 1 | 2 | 1 | | • |
| | 14 | **Maytag** MGR5875QD[W] | 1,150 | 68 | ○ | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | 2 | 2 | 1 | • | • |
| CR BEST BUY | 15 | **Maytag** MGR5751AD[W] MGR5752BD[] | 550 | 66 | ○ | ● | ◒ | ○ | ◒ | 1 | 3 | 0 | | • |
| | 16 | **Frigidaire** Gallery GLGF386D[S] | 1,000 | 65 | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | ○ | ◒ | 2 | 2 | 1 | • | • |
| | 17 | **Kenmore** (Sears) Elite 7942[3] | 1,600 | 63 | ○ | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | 2 | 2 | 1 | • | • |
| | **DUAL-FUEL MODELS** *These combine a gas cooktop and an electric oven.* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 18 | **Bosch** HDS71[5]2 HDS72[8]2 | 2,000 | 71 | ○ | ● | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | 2 | 1 | 1 | • | • |
| | 19 | **GE** Profile J2B918WEK[WW] | 1,700 | 70 | ◒ | ● | ◒ | ○ | ◒ | 1 | 2 | 2 | • | • |
| | 20 | **GE** Profile J2B912WEK[WW] [1] | 1,400 | 69 | ◒ | ● | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | 1 | 2 | 1 | | • |
| | 21 | **Kenmore** (Sears) Elite 7946[3] | 1,800 | 66 | ○ | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | ◒ | 2 | 2 | 1 | • | • |

[1] *Runs on 120 volts; oven is electric and gas.*

## Guide to the Ratings

**Overall score** reflects cooktop performance, oven capacity, baking, broiling,and oven self-cleaning, as well as surface temperature and other safety issues. Displayed scores are rounded; models are listed in order of precise overall score. **High heat** denotes how quickly the highest-powered cooktop element or burner heated water to near-boiling in our tests. **Low heat** reflects how well the lowest-powered cooktop element or burner melted and held chocolate without scorching and how well the most powerful element or burner, set on low, held tomato sauce below a boil. **Oven capacity** is our measurement of usable space. **Baking** reflects whether cakes and cookies baked on two racks were evenly browned. **Broiling** denotes even browning of a pan of burgers and high-heat searing ability. Under **burners,** High denotes more than 2,000 watts for electric, 11,000 Btu/hr. for gas. Medium: between 1,500 and 2,000 watts for electric, between 6,500 and 11,000 Btu/hr. for gas. Low: 1,500 watts or less for electric, 6,500 Btu/hr. or less for gas. **Price** is the approximate retail. Under **brand & model,** brackets show color codes.

# SELECT Ratings cooktops & wall ovens

**Best choices from our tests of 60 models.**

• **Availability** Most models in stores through December 2007.

Excellent ◓ Very good ○ Good ◒ Fair ● Poor

**Within types, in performance order. Blue key numbers indicate Quick Picks.**

| Key number | Brand & models | Price | Overall score (0–100; P F G VG E) | Test results: High heat | Test results: Low heat | Features: Number of burners: High power | Number of burners: Medium power | Number of burners: Low power | Expandable elements/ continuous grates |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Similar models,** in small type, are comparable to tested model. | | | | | | | | |
| | **30-INCH ELECTRIC COOKTOPS** *These smoothtops ease cleanup.* | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | **Electrolux** Icon E30EC65E[SS] | $1,200 | 85 | ◓ | ● | 1 | 2 | 2 | • |
| CR BEST BUY 2 | **Kenmore** (Sears) 4273[2] | 600 | 82 | ◓ | ● | 2 | 0 | 2 | • |
| 3 | **Whirlpool** RCC3024L[Q] D RCC3024R[ ] | 470 | 80 | ◓ | ● | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| 4 | **Maytag** MEC5430BD[W] | 570 | 78 | ◓ | ● | 1 | 2 | 1 | • |
| | **36-INCH GAS COOKTOPS** *These provide the confirmation of a visible flame.* | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | **GE** JGP975WEK[WW] | 1,200 | 79 | ○ | ● | 1 | 2 | 2 | • |
| CR BEST BUY 6 | **Maytag** MGC6536BD[W] | 720 | 71 | ○ | ● | 1 | 3 | 1 | • |
| CR BEST BUY 7 | **GE** JGP637WEJ[WW] | 650 | 65 | ○ | ◓ | 1 | 2 | 2 | |
| 8 | **Magic Chef** CGC2536AD[W] | 320 | 59 | ○ | ◓ | 1 | 4 | 0 | |
| | **INDUCTION COOKTOPS** *These provide quick heating, but are pricey.* | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | **Thermador** CIT302D[S] | 1,725 | 94 | ◓ | ● | 2 | 1 | 1 | • |
| 10 | **Kenmore** (Sears) Elite 4280[0] | 1,800 | 91 | ◓ | ● | 3 | 0 | 1 | |

**Within types, in performance order. Blue key numbers indicate Quick Picks.**

| Key number | Brand & model | Price | Overall score (0–100; P F G VG E) | Test results: Baking | Test results: Broiling | Test results: Capacity | Features: Covered element | Features: Convection mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **ELECTRIC WALL OVENS** *These eliminate bending compared with a range oven.* | | | | | | | |
| 11 | **GE** Profile JT915WF[WW] | $1,500 | 66 | ◓ | ◓ | ○ | • | • |
| 12 | **GE** JTP20WF[WW] | 850 | 63 | ○ | ◓ | ◓ | | |
| 13 | **KitchenAid** Superba KEBC107K[WH] | 1,600 | 62 | ◓ | ◓ | ◓ | • | • |
| 14 | **Frigidaire** Gallery GLEB30S9F[S] | 1,400 | 61 | ◓ | ◓ | ○ | • | • |
| 15 | **Frigidaire** Gallery GLEB27S7C[S] 1 | 850 | 53 | ◓ | ◓ | ◒ | | • |

D *Discontinued, but similar model is available. Price is for similar model.* 1 *27 inches wide; door opens to side.*

For Guide to the Ratings, see page 33.

## CR Quick Recommendations

Our Select Ratings focus on tested cooktops and wall ovens with the performance and value required to make our Quick Picks list (**blue** key numbers). To broaden your selection, we also include other fine choices that distinguished themselves in our tests.

## QUICK PICKS

### 30-INCH ELECTRIC COOKTOPS

**Best for most; fine overall:**

The **Kenmore** (2), **Whirlpool** (3), and **Maytag** (4) all did well, though the Kenmore has a 3,000-watt element with slightly faster cooking. Paying more for the top-scoring **Electrolux** (1) buys five elements instead of the usual four.

### 36-INCH GAS AND INDUCTION COOKTOPS

**If you prefer a gas flame:**

The **GE** (5) offers higher-powered burners, while the **Maytag** (6) and **GE** (7) trade some performance for a lower price. The Magic Chef (8) costs even less but lacks a separate low-powered burner.

**If you want the speed of induction:**

Induction cooktops use a magnetic field for fast heating. The Thermador (9) and Kenmore (10) cost less than some but are still pricey. The Thermador includes electric elements; the Kenmore, while competent, had less-convenient controls.

### 30-INCH ELECTRIC WALL OVENS

**Best for most; fine overall:**

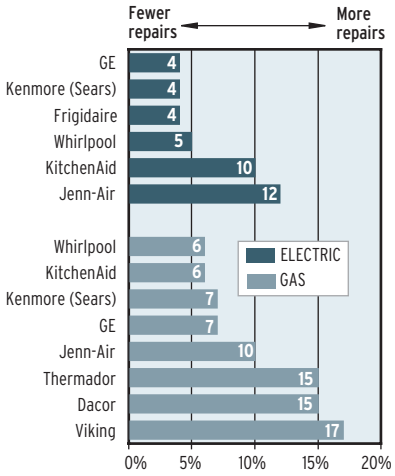
The **GE** (11), **KitchenAid** (13), and **Frigidaire** (14) blend performance and features; the KitchenAid adds capacity. Also consider the lower-priced GE (12) and Frigidaire (15), which has convection.

## Brand repair history

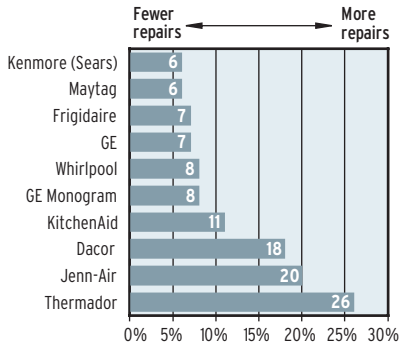
The graphs show the percentage of the following brands of electric and gas cooktops bought between 2002 and 2006 and electric wall ovens bought between 2001 and 2006 that have ever been repaired or had a serious problem. Differences of less than 4 points aren't meaningful. The most repair-prone cooktop brands were Jenn-Air and KitchenAid (electrics), and Dacor, Thermador, and Viking (gas). Thermador was the most repair-prone oven brand, followed by Jenn-Air and Dacor. Models within a brand may vary, and changes in design or manufacture may affect reliability. Still, choosing a brand with a good repair history can improve your odds of getting a reliable model.

Data are based on over 46,000 reader responses about cooktops and wall ovens to the Annual Product Reliability Survey conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. Data are adjusted to eliminate differences linked solely to age of product.

### ELECTRIC & GAS COOKTOPS




### ELECTRIC WALL OVENS



# SELECT Ratings over-the-range microwave ovens

Best choices from our tests of 32 models.

• **Availability** Most models in stores through December 2007.

Excellent · Very good · Good · Fair · Poor

**In performance order. Blue key numbers indicate Quick Picks.**

| Key number | Brand & model | Price | Overall score (0–100; P F G VG E) | Evenness | Auto defrost | Ease of use | Capacity: Claimed (cu. ft.) | Capacity: Usable (cu. ft.) | Features: Convection | Features: Stainless avail. | Size (HxWxD in.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Similar models,** in small type, are comparable to tested model. | | | | | | | | | | |
| CR BEST BUY 1 | **LG** LMV2053[SB] | $300 | 78 | ◓ | ● | ◓ | 2.0 | 0.9 | | • | 17x30x18 |
| 2 | **Kenmore** (Sears) Elite 8083[9] | 530 | 77 | ◓ | ● | ● | 2.0 | 1.6 | | • | 17x30x18 |
| 3 | **Whirlpool** Gold GH4155XP[B] | 430 | 76 | ◓ | ● | ● | 1.5 | 0.7 | | • | 17x30x18 |
| CR BEST BUY 4 | **Samsung** SMH7177[STE] | 300 | 74 | ◓ | ● | ◓ | 1.7 | 0.8 | | • | 17x30x19 |
| 5 | **LG** Glide 'n Cook LMVM2055[ST] | 430 | 73 | ○ | ● | ◓ | 2.0 | 1.5 | | • | 17x30x18 |
| 6 | **Panasonic** Genius NN-H264[B]F | 300 | 70 | ○ | ◓ | ● | 1.9 | 0.8 | | • | 17x30x15 |
| CR BEST BUY 7 | **Frigidaire** Gallery GLMV169D[B] **Professional** PLMV169D[] | 300 | 67 | ◓ | ◓ | ◓ | 1.6 | 0.8 | | • | 17x30x17 |
| 8 | **Whirlpool** Gold Velos GH7208XR[Q] | 870 | 66 | ○ | ○ | ◓ | 2.0 | 1.1 | • | • | 19x30x20 |
| 9 | **GE** Profile Spacemaker JMV1790[B]K | 650 | 65 | ○ | ◓ | ◓ | 1.7 | 0.8 | • | • | 17x30x18 |

## Guide to the Ratings

**Overall score** is based mainly on cooking evenness, defrosting, and convenience. Displayed scores are rounded; models are listed in order of precise overall score. **Evenness** is uniform heating of a dish of cold mashed potatoes. **Auto defrost** is how completely and evenly the program defrosted 1 lb. of frozen ground beef. **Ease of use** is how easily ovens can be set without the owner's manual. **Capacity** claimed is as listed on the oven or package; usable is our measurement of what fits onto the turntable or sliding tray. **Dimensions** (HxWxD) is our measurements rounded up to the nearest inch. **Price** is approximate retail. Under **brand & model,** the color code is bracketed.

## CR Quick Recommendations

Our Select Ratings focus on tested over-the-range microwave ovens with the performance and value required to make our Quick Picks list (**blue** key numbers). To broaden your selection, we also include other fine choices that distinguished themselves in our tests. All have sensors that help prevent under- or overcooking, and all are available with stainless trim.

### QUICK PICKS

**Best for most; fine performance:**

The **LG** (1) offers the most performance for the price, though the similarly sized **Whirlpool** (3), **Samsung** (4), and **Frigidaire** (7) come close. The Panasonic (6) is also well priced and performs competently overall, but it cooks less evenly.

**For added cooking space:**

The roomy **Kenmore** (2) trades the usual turntable for a sliding tray that keeps wide plates moving for more-even cooking. The spacious, sliding-tray LG (5) costs less but cooks less evenly.

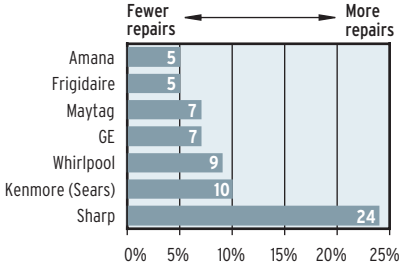
**If you're willing to pay for convection:**

The Whirlpool (8) and GE (9) performed better than others that have a convection feature, though both cook less evenly than our Quick Picks. Between those two, the Whirlpool has more space and better venting, the GE better defrosting.

## Brand repair history

The graph shows the percentage of over-the-range (OTR) microwave ovens bought between 2002 and the first half of 2006 that have been repaired or had a serious problem. Differences of less than 3 points are not meaningful. Sharp has been the most repair-prone OTR brand. Kenmore (Sears) and Whirlpool repair rates were affected by a major recall in 2002. Models within a brand may vary, and changes in design and manufacture may affect reliability. Still, choosing a brand with a good repair history can improve your odds of getting a reliable oven. Because countertop microwaves are relatively inexpensive, they are usually replaced rather than repaired. But historically they have been reliable products.

**OVER-THE-RANGE MICROWAVE OVENS**




Data are based on over 19,000 reader responses to our Annual Product Reliability Survey, conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. Data are adjusted to eliminate differences linked solely to age and usage of the product.

## doingitright

### PLAN FOR PROPER VENTING

Even the best-venting over-the-range microwave oven can't exhaust cooking smoke and fumes nearly as well as a good range hood. Two CR Best Buys from our tests: the $225 under-cabinet **Kenmore 5234** and the $525 wall-chimney **Kenmore 5030.** If you're venting a kitchen-island cooktop, consider the **Jenn-Air JXT8142AD,** $2,000, and **GE Monogram ZV1050SF,** $2,250; both are Quick Picks and mount to and vent through the ceiling.

Whether you decide on a range hood or an over-the-range microwave oven, these simple steps can help you vent as much smoke, cooking odor, and heat as possible:

- Install the range hood or microwave oven according to directions, typically 18 to 30 inches above burners or elements.
- Vent either appliance to the outside.
- Choose solid, smooth-walled metal ducting in the largest size that fits your hood or oven.
- Keep duct runs short and minimize curves.
- Prevent backdrafts. Use a wall or roof cap outside the house so that smoke vented outside stays outside.
- Wash or replace the filters every one to three months. Do so more frequently if you use your range often.